

House Bill 163
January 22, 2013
Presented by Ken McDonald
House Fish, Wildlife and Parks Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, I am Ken McDonald, Wildlife Division Administrator of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP). I am here to provide information regarding House Bill 163.

HB 163 would eliminate the trophy fee for mountain lions. Trophy fees were first issued for grizzly bears in 1967. They were first required of mountain lion licenses in 1984. The concept behind issuance of trophy fees was rather than sell an expensive trophy license to hunt mountain lions, a cheaper license to hunt was sold so as not to discourage hunting, and then additional cost would be charged to those that harvest a lion. Additional justification was to direct the harvest towards the larger or "trophy" animals. Early on apparently the fee was to go towards lion monitoring, although it isn't earmarked as such.

In terms of fiscal impact, last year there were 470 lions harvested by hunters, so at \$50 per, the revenue was \$23,500. It may be slightly more into the future as harvest is expected to go up.

For comparison purposes a resident lion license in surrounding states varies from \$24 to \$84 vs. \$19 in MT; and nonresident licenses range in cost from \$323 to \$376 vs. \$350 in MT

This is one of many bills that affects hunting and fishing license costs, structure, and fees, each of which is being addressed independently. It would be timely over the next interim to look at incremental changes that have been made over time to all FWP licenses, fees, and license structure to determine the most effective and equitable system for hunters and anglers.

With regards to this bill, FWP hasn't taken a position but will be available to answer any questions.